

TYPHOON TESS (25W)

The last of two significant tropical cyclones to occur during November, Tess developed slowly for three days before the first warning. Tess was the only tropical cyclone to track across southern Vietnam during 1988.

Tess' persistent area of convection was first mentioned on the Significant Tropical Weather Advisory at 010600Z. For the next

three days the disturbance tracked south-westward along the edge of the deep northeasterly flow of the winter monsoon. Once across the rugged Philippine Islands and over open water in the Sulu Sea, the tropical cyclone (Figure 3-25-1) became more organized and required a Tropical Cyclone Formation Alert at 031730Z. A satellite intensity estimate of 30 kt (15 m/sec) prompted the first warning

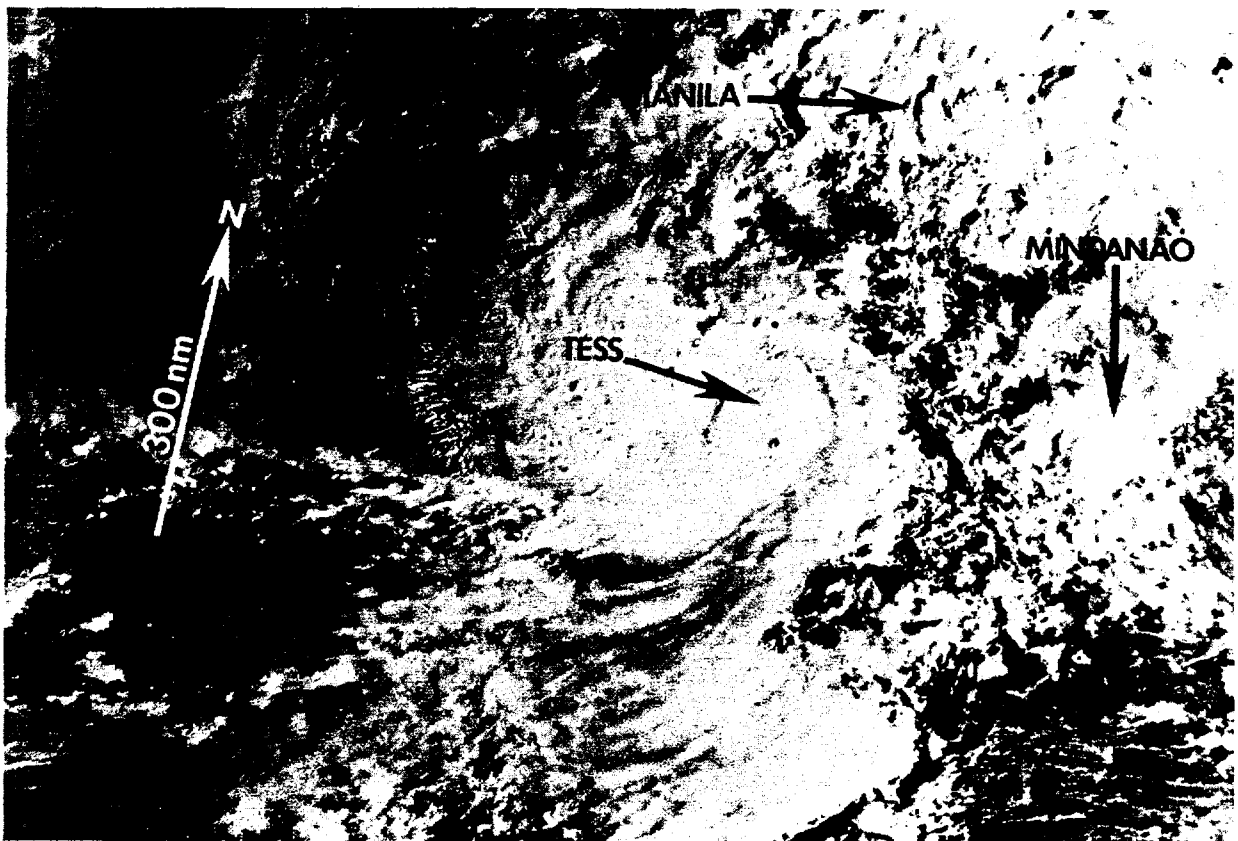


Figure 3-25-1. As a disturbance, Tess showed improved convection and organization as it entered the Sulu Sea (032221Z November DMSP visual imagery).

on Tropical Depression 25W (Figure 3-25-2) at 040000Z.

Almost immediately after the first warning, the track became westward. The most probable explanation for this change appeared in the low-level northeasterly gradient flow. The pressure gradient between the winter high and the lower pressure associated with Tess had sustained a persistent flow of at least 30 kt (15 m/sec) upstream of the tropical cyclone since 1 November. This upstream pressure gradient relaxed on 4 November and the gales clustered around Tess.

Along with this track change came

intensification, as the system crossed Palawan Island and entered the South China Sea. At 040600Z, satellite intensity estimates indicated 35 kt (18 m/sec) surface winds and the tropical depression was upgraded to tropical storm intensity. The system (Figure 3-25-3) reached its peak intensity of 65 kt (33 m/sec) at 051200Z.

As Tess approached the coast of southern Vietnam, it began to weaken. The tropical cyclone was downgraded to tropical storm intensity and finalled at 060600Z. The remnants of Tess continued to track westward across the Mekong river delta. No reports of damage or loss of life were received.

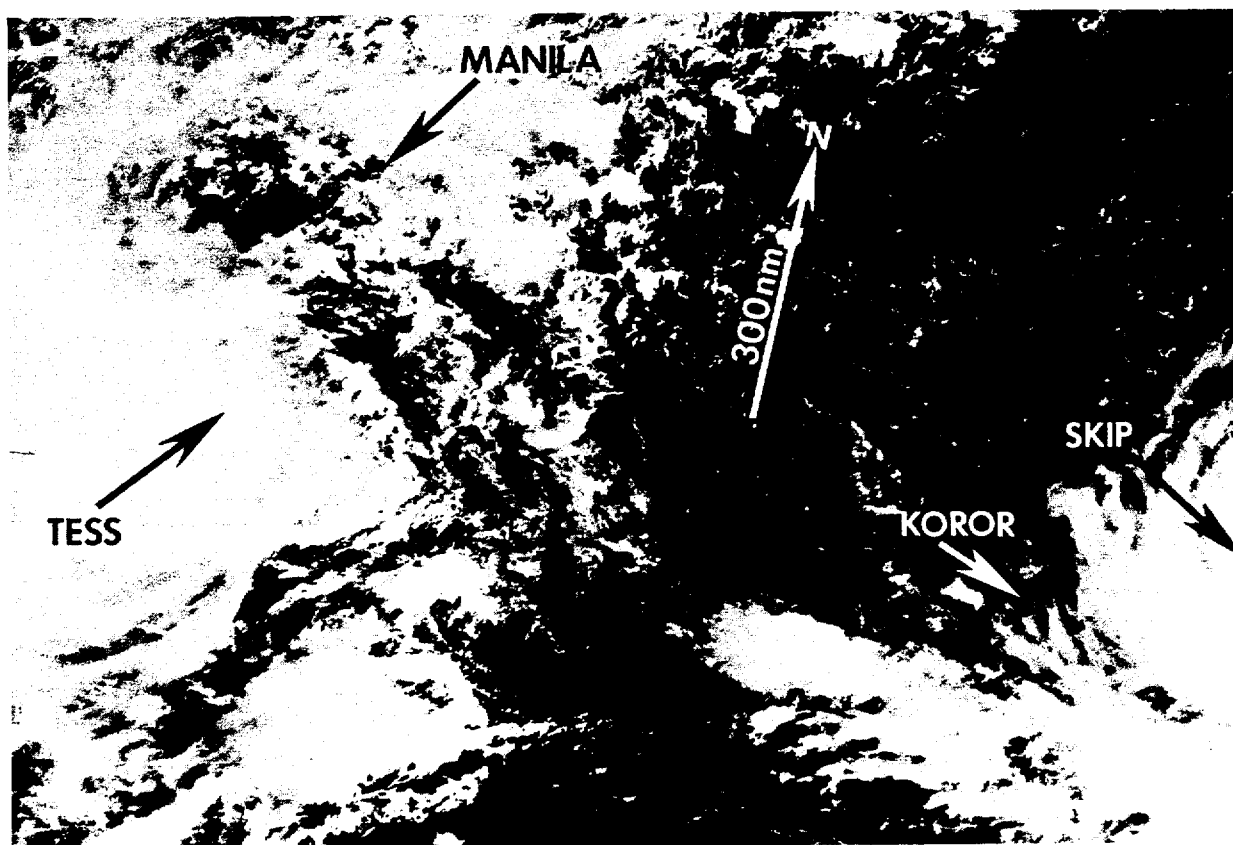


Figure 3-25-2. Tess, shortly after the first warning was issued. The cloudiness at the picture's lower right is associated with Skip (24W) (040053Z November DMSP visual imagery).

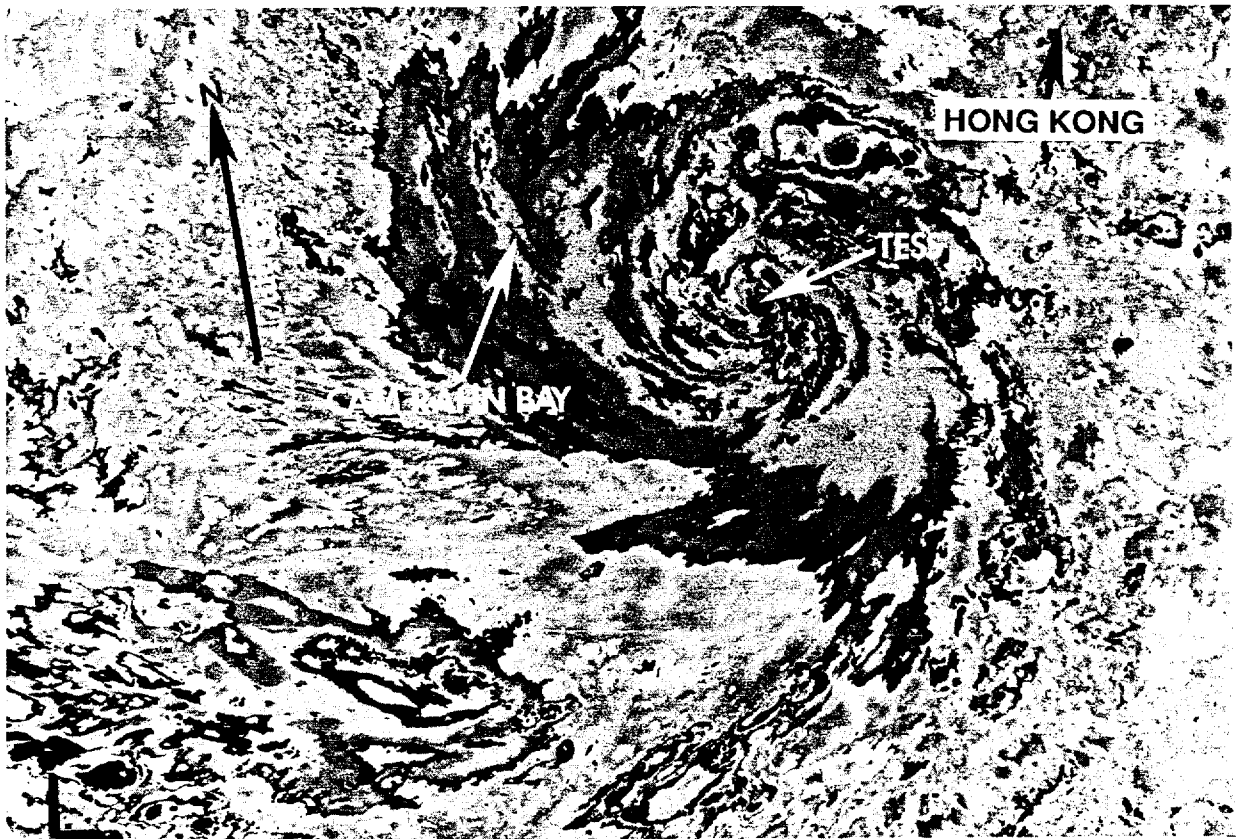


Figure 3-25-3. Tess just before reaching its peak intensity in the South China Sea (051054Z November DMSP infrared imagery).